

JAIME HERRERA BEUTLER  
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April 30, 2020

Ms. Robyn Thorson  
Director, Region 1  
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
911 NE 11th Ave.  
Portland, Oregon 97232

Dear Regional Director Thorson:

I am writing to request that you work to resume public access to the National Wildlife Refuges in Southwest Washington that have been tightly restricted or closed during the COVID outbreak.

With appropriate safety guidelines still in place, this move would give families and seniors in our region additional options to get outside and promote their physical health.

Recently, Governor Inslee announced a proposal to reopen state-managed lands on May 5 for local day-use recreation. The decision to close or restrict public access points on federal land was made in close proximity to state closures in March; consequently, I urge you to take all necessary actions to responsibly reopen federal land without unnecessary delay. The Ridgefield Wildlife Refuge, for example, provides an enormous recreational benefit to the local community here in Clark County. Local officials and citizens are extremely anxious to resume responsible enjoyment of this asset that can easily accommodate necessary social distancing guidelines.

During this challenging time, public lands can provide an excellent opportunity for families and residents to safely get out of the house and enjoy our region's beautiful wildlife, which would be a significant boost to their emotional and physical health. I appreciate your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Jaime Herrera Beutler  
Member of Congress